

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 COME-00  
EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 L-03 DODE-00  
PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 /081 W  
-----094545 050824Z /15

R 041243Z AUG 78  
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2046  
INFO AMEMBASY ALGIERS  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY RABAT  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
USMISSION GENEVA

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BRUSSELS FOR USEC LABATT  
PARIS FOR LABATT

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINS, ELAB, TS  
SUBJ: SOUSSE UGTT TRIAL OPENS

REF: TUNIS 5188 (NOTAL)

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. SOUSSE TRIAL OF UNION GENERAL DES TRAVAILLEURS  
TUNISIENS (UGTT) DEFENDANTS REOPENED JULY 31 IN CHARGED  
ATMOSPHERE WITH MANY HUNDEDS OF SPECTATORS SURROUNDING  
COURTROOM BY 7 A.M. AMONG THESE OBSERVERS WERE  
REPRESENTATIVES FROM A FRENCH LAWYERS ASSOCIATION,  
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, AND THE TUNISIAN LEAGUE FOR THE  
RIGHTS OF MAN, WHO WERE ALLOWED INTO THE COURTROOM AT  
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3:30 P.M. BY THE PRESIDING JUDGE FOLLOWING REQUESTS BY  
DEFENSE ATTORNEYS. ONE HUNDRED AND ONE DEFENDANTS ARE  
TO BE TRIED, OF WHICH 49 HAVE BEEN IMPRISONED SINCE  
JANUARY 1978, WHILE 52 WERE FREE UNDER BOND. BEFORE THE  
TRIAL BEGAN, VARIOUS MATERIALS WERE HAULED INTO  
THE COURTROOM FOR EXHIBIT: CERTAIN PIECES OF WOOD,  
CUDGELS, LENGTHS OF CHAIN, AND EMPTY BOTTLES. CONSIDERABLE

VOLUME OF TESTIMONY LATER REVOLVED AROUND THE INTENT, USE, AND OWNERSHIP OF THESE OBJECTS, WHICH DEFENSE PICTURED AS: ROUTINE AND NECESSARY TO THE NORMAL OPERATION OF THE UNION. TWO PISTOLS, CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN FOUND IN REGIONAL UNION HEADQUARTERS, WERE ALSO PRESENTED AS EVIDENCE.

2. MAJOR DEFENDANT IS HABIB BEN ACHOUR, FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL, REGIONAL UNION (NO RELATION TO HABIB ACHOUR, OUSTED SECRETARY-GENERAL, NATIONAL UGTT). FIRST TO TESTIFY, BEN ACHOUR TESTIMONY LASTED 3 1/2 HOURS. REPRESENTATIVE EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE PRESIDING JUDGE AND BEN ACHOUR CENTERED AROUND THE LATTER'S POSTURE REGARDING STRIKE VIOLENCE, PROTRACTED ARGUMENTS AND RIDICULE ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE ON DISPLAY, AND ALLEGATIONS BY BEN ACHOUR THAT THE POLICE INTERROGATOR "WRENCHED DECLARATIONS OUT OF HIM BY FORCE." BEN ACHOUR DEMANDED TO SEE A "LOCALLY MADE RIFLE" WHICH SUPPOSEDLY HAD BEEN FOUND AT THE HALL. WHEN PRODUCED, IT WAS A RECTANGULAR PIECE OF WOOD ATTACHED TO AN IRON BAR. HE EXPLAINED THE PRESENCE OF CHAINS IN THE HALL TO SECURE GROUND FLOOR DOORS AND BOTTLES OF "ACID" AS ORDINARY CLEANING PRODUCTS AVAILABLE ON THE MARKET. WHEN ASKED WHY BRICKS WERE STACKED INSIDE UPPER FLOOR WINDOWS, HE REPLIED THAT THEY WERE TO DEFEND THE HALL AGAINST ATTACKERS. BOTH BEN ACHOUR AND HIS COUNSEL COMPLAINED REPEATEDLY THAT THE EVIDENCE ON DISPLAY WAS UNSEALED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND THAT IT HAD BEEN TAMPERED WITH BY ADDITIONS AND SUBTRACTIONS FROM THE USUAL INVENTORY OF UNION PROPERTY. HE ENDED HIS TESTIMONY BY REGISTERING A COMPLAINT ABOUT PRISON CONDITIONS AND MAKING A STATEMENT OF INNOCENCE.

3. A REMARKABLE ASPECT OF THIS TRIAL SO FAR IS ITS DETAILED COVERAGE IN INDEPENDENT SISTER DAILIES AS-SABAH AND LE TEMPS. ALTHOUGH VARIOUS ALLEGATIONS OF POLICE MALTREATMENT ARE QUOTED, THE PAPERS DID NOT REPRINT TESTIMONY ABOUT THE CONDITIONS OF THE PRISONERS' DETENTION: THESE ARE REFERENCED IN PASSING. SOME ISSUES OF PARTY PAPER L'ACTION MENTIONED TRIAL, WHILE GOVERNMENT-OWNED LA PRESSE HAD RESUME OF PROCEEDINGS. THE COURT SEEMS TO BE CONCENTRATING ON THE CHARGES LINKED WITH WEAPONRY WHILE A MAJORITY OF THE DEFENDANTS ARE COUNTERCHARGING POLICE DURESS IN OBTAINING DAMAGING STATEMENTS. IN THE INTERRO-5946 0#ASE OF THE TRIAL, WHICH IS NOW IN PROCESS, MUCH TESTIMONY IS CENTERING ON THE VALIDITY OF DEFENDANTS' STATEMENTS AND CONFESSIONS.

4. FOR DEPARTMENT'S INFORMATION, CHARGES AGAINST  
101 ACCUSED ARE AS FOLLOWS:

AGAINST 39 PERSONS:

- A) INCITING TO ARMED ATTACK.
- B) CALLING FOR GROPINGS OF ARMED PERSONS IN PUBLIC  
THOROUGHFARES.
- C) POSSESSING STORES OF ARMS AND AMMUNITIONS
- D) COLLECTING AND DISTRIBUTING ARMS.
- E) DISTURBING PUBLIC ORDER AND TRANQUILITY.

AGAINST 62 PERSONS:

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- A) BELONGING TO A GROUP OF WHICH MEMBERS ARE DEDICATED  
BY COMMON AGREEMENT TO INCITE PERSONS TO ARMED ATTACK.
  - B) TRANSPORT AND POSSESSION OF ARMS WITHOUT  
AUTHORIZATION.
- MULCAHY

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** TRIALS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
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**Subject:** SOUSSE UGTT TRIAL OPENS  
**TAGS:** PINS, ELAB, TS  
**To:** STATE  
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